Please amend the application as follows:

In the Claims

Claims 1, 14 and 15 have been amended and are presented below in amended form. Please add Claims 27-37.

In accordance with 37 C.F.R. § 1.121(c)(1)(ii), amendments to the claims are indicated in the attached "Marked Up Version of Amendments" (pages i - ii).

1. (Twice amended) A receptor molecule which binds to tumor necrosis factor comprising all or a functional portion of two extracellular domains of tumor necrosis factor receptors linked to a polypeptide linker, wherein said polypeptide linker is covalently bonded to said extracellular domains via peptide bonds and wherein the receptor molecule is capable of binding to a tumor necrosis factor trimer in a stoichiometric ratio of almost 1:1.

14. (Amended) Isolated DNA comprising a receptor molecule which binds to tumor necrosis factor comprising all or a functional portion of two extracellular domains of tumor necrosis factor receptors linked to a polypeptide linker, wherein said polypeptide linker is covalently bonded to said extracellular domains via peptide bonds and wherein the DNA comprises SEQ ID NO: 1.

15. (Twice amended) A method of making a construct which expresses a receptor molecule which binds to tumor necrosis factor comprising all or a functional portion of the extracellular domain of two or more tumor necrosis factor receptors linked to a polypeptide linker, wherein the receptor molecule is capable of binding to a tumor necrosis factor trimer in a stoichiometric ratio of almost 1:1, comprising the steps of:

a) obtaining a first vector which expresses all or a functional portion of an extracellular domain of a first tumor necrosis factor receptor and a signal peptide of a secreted protein;

b) obtaining a second vector which expresses all or a functional portion of an extracellular domain of a second tumor necrosis factor receptor; and

c) ligating the first vector of (a) to the second vector of (b) using a coding sequence for a polypeptide linker

so that the first vector of (a) is linked to the second vector of (b) using the coding sequence for the polypeptide linker resulting in a construct which expresses all or a functional portion of the extracellular domain of the first tumor necrosis factor receptor and all or a portion of the extracellular domain of the second tumor necrosis factor receptor linked using the polypeptide linker.

27. (New) The receptor molecule of Claim 1 wherein the tumor necrosis is of human origin and the polylinker is a polyglycine linker sequence.

28. (New) Isolated DNA comprising a receptor molecule which binds to tumor necrosis factor comprising all or a functional portion of two extracellular domains of tumor necrosis factor receptors linked to a polypeptide linker, wherein said polypeptide linker is covalently bonded to said extracellular domains via peptide bonds and wherein the DNA encodes the amino acid sequence of SEQ ID NO: 2.

29. (New) A receptor molecule which binds to tumor necrosis factor comprising all or a functional portion of two extracellular domains of tumor necrosis factor receptors linked to a polypeptide linker comprising SEQ ID NO:2.

30. (New) A method of making a construct which expresses all or a functional portion of the extracellular domain of two or more tumor necrosis factor receptors linked to a polypeptide linker wherein the construct expresses the amino acid sequence of SEQ ID NO:2, comprising the steps of:

d) obtaining a first vector which expresses all or a functional portion of an extracellular domain of a first tumor necrosis factor receptor and a signal peptide of a secreted protein;

e) obtaining a second vector which expresses all or a functional portion of an extracellular domain of a second tumor necrosis factor receptor; and

f) ligating the first vector of (a) to the second vector of (b) using a coding sequence for a polypeptide linker

so that the first vector of (a) is linked to the second vector of (b) using the coding sequence for the polypeptide linker resulting in a construct which expresses all or a functional portion of the extracellular domain of the first tumor necrosis factor receptor and all or a portion of the extracellular domain of the second tumor necrosis factor receptor linked using the polypeptide linker.

31. (New) The method of Claim 30 further comprising the steps of:

a) obtaining a first vector which codes for all or a functional portion of an extracellular domain of a first tumor necrosis factor receptor and signal peptide of a secreted protein linked to all or a functional portion of an extracellular domain of a second tumor necrosis factor receptor using a coding sequence for a polypeptide linker;

b) obtaining a second vector which codes for all or a functional portion of an extracellular domain of a third tumor necrosis factor receptor ; and

c) ligating the first vector of (a) to the second vector of (b) using a coding sequence for a polypeptide linker so that the first vector of (a) is linked to the second vector of (b) using the coding sequence for a polypeptide linker resulting in a construct which expresses all or a functional portion of the extracellular domain of the first tumor necrosis factor receptor and all or a portion of the extracellular domain of the second tumor necrosis factor receptor and all or a portion of the extracellular domain of the third tumor necrosis factor receptor all being linked using the first and second polypeptide linker.

32. (New) Cells which express a receptor molecule encoded by the DNA of Claim 28.

33. (New) A method of inhibiting the biological activity of tumor necrosis factor comprising administering to a host a TNF-inhibiting amount of a receptor molecule encoded by the DNA of Claim 28.

34. (New) A method of treating or preventing a tumor necrosis factor related disease in a host in need thereof comprising administering to the host a TNF-inhibiting amount of a receptor molecule encoded by the DNA of Claim 28.

35. (New) A method of Claim 34, wherein the tumor necrosis factor related disease is selected from the group consisting of: an autoimmune disease, an inflammatory bowel disease, a bacterial infection, a viral infection, a parasitic infection, a malignancy, and a neurodegenerative disease.

36. (New) A method of Claim 35 wherein the TNF related disease is selected from the group consisting of: rheumatoid arthritis, septic shock, cerebral malaria, inflammatory bowel disease, multiple sclerosis, allograft rejection, host versus graft disease, neoplastic pathology and endotoxemic response.

37. (New) A method of Claim 34 wherein the tumor necrosis factor related disease is rheumatoid arthritis.

REMARKS

Applicants would like to thank the Examiner for his careful reading of the instant specification and his helpful suggestions for amending the claims.